

CHAPTER III

TREATMENT OF THEMES

The great variety of themes depicted in the illustration are, in essence, elaborations of the various events of the emperor's life, expanded so as to include a number of objects to complement the central figure of the emperor. Animals, hills and trees are introduced to intensify the landscape, camp auxiliaries, lay men and buildings to specify the situation; while attendants, the royal insignia, the decorative objects and the like follow as a matter of course to complete the environment where the action takes place.

In many of the miniatures the figure of the emperor does not appear at all, yet the very association of his personality in the mind of the artist seems to go a long way in retaining the mode of treatment experienced in such themes as are depicted under the impress of his dignified personality. The prosaic decore of the court scenes, the air surrounding the martial life of an adventurous emperor, the seriousness and solemnity accompanying the behaviour of the courtiers, all persist as the invetiable regulation of the court painter's profession. There are hardly any occasions for lips to open in smiles, nor is gaiety to gay. It seems as though even happiness is disciplined in the mannerism and etiquette of the court.

It seems the marked tendency of the painter to employ the objects directly related to the theme in the greater number. For instance while representing a hunt, he would hardly like to spare a blank space and the different animals will be drawn by him crammed in a place.

Similarly, the picture representing musical performance will show the greater number of musical instruments and a feast scene will accommodate the greater variety of utensils and so on. The tendency of emphasizing the objects specifically connected with the idea persists in the expedition scenes also i.e. war scene, camps, etc. etc.)

Cavalry, the main force of the Mughals is represented on numerous folios to build up the whole picture of a battle ground etc. Elephants employed casually appear here and there with hardly any evidence of the side on which they might have been employed. The army is shown well armoured while taking the field and that include those charged with such auxiliary assignments as beating up the drums, driving the elephants and carrying of royal insignia. An artist while showing the scenes of frays does not seem to make any distinction between the arms and armours of those of his opponents in or outside India. The designs on the uniforms of the army men viz: Rajput, Afghan or Central Asian, are similarly treated.

The drum beaters, insignia holders form the background of the illustrations. Rarely, the royal ladies represented on the battle ground in the distant corner watched the scene from the imaris mounted on elephant's back. The illustrations depicting the themes of war and various battle grounds taken by the emperor or his army generals are greatest in number. One come across of a certain amount of similarity in them. There are all composed on more or less similar lines allowing for variety only in the juxtaposition of figures, or the directions in which the contents are placed. Infact, it is possible to inter-

change their blurbs specifying the location of the battles without the loss of relevance. Nevertheless the imaginative artist does not seem to be wanting in the art of permuting the contents of similar paintings. Normally the emperor's figure is given in the centre or atleast at a prominent spot. His figure is sought to be brought out further by leaving some open space around him. The attendants, courtiers and soldiers are lined up or clustered around in groups depending upon the text of the themes. A separate corner is left for the bearers of the royal insignia. These are the essentials of the majority of paintings. The rest of the space is filled up with other animals or inanimate objects relevant to a situation. A large portion of an open land sparsely over grown with trees, precipice, hillock, a farmer or a shepherd in the background, a part of a stream preferably with ducks swimming in it, a row of birds in a distant corner and a strip of the sky are the concomitants of an expedition scene. When a battle is shown the scene is naturally saturated with action while open space precipices and birds etc.; are either omitted for want of room or relevance or they appear very casual. Simultaneity of vision and profusion of architectural objects are necessarily used in a variety of scenes such as besieging of a fort, assaults in and outside the walls of a city. Camp scenes are often composed with the distant background of domes and parapets of the near by town. The emperor's camp occupies the largest space in the composition and is provided with Qanats. The emperor is shown busy in directing the generals; or examining the war-botty, the war-prisoners or the heads of rebellions; or meeting some ambassador or a prince and so on. The stable of camels, horses etc. form the background of such themes along with



PLATE XVI



other objects of nature. In a few instances stable servants are represented at work in the background of the picture. Sometimes a river with boats or castle or buildings are employed to build up the distant view.

In a few instances, the representation of various chores in a camp come to our view. On folio 205 (Tuzuk; Delhi), Babur is shown visiting the camp which includes the camp-market displaying a shop-keeper weighing the article on the demand of the customer. Though such objects remain subsidiary (plate xvi). In the present example the central figure of the emperor, followed by the guards, dominates the whole view. The night in a camp depicted on plate 67 (Razm; Jaipore) is represented by displaying nobles sleeping inside the camps and watchmen on their duties with torches in their hands.

Court scenes in general display the emperor seated in a throne placed on a raised platform, commonly in a side, or on a prominent place in the composition. Both the wings i.e. right and left are occupied by nobles and others and the extreme margins by the attendants etc. The insignia holders took their position in a side, close to the emperor. The emperor is generally represented receiving ambassadors,

1. Tarikh; f. 116b (Patna); Tuzuk; f. 163 (B.M.).

2. Akb; ff. 157b, 201, 226b, 248 (C.B.); pls. 22, 31, 38, 41, 48, 53, 60, 61, 65, 75, 81, 84, 85, 87, 98, 100, 103, 108, 109(V.A.); Diwan; f. 147 (Rampur); Tarikh; ff. 46b, 48a, 54b, 57b, 65b, 67b, 89b, 101a, 129a, 144b, 157b, 226a, 230a, 269a, 322a, 332a, 328b, 337b (Patna). Razm; pls. 26, 33, 75, 93, 94, 100, 123, 133, 140, 142 (Jaipore); pl. 7 (Baroda).

nobles, a prince, issuing the orders, examining the war-botty,³
 hearing the State-affairs and casually enjoying jugglers or musical⁴
 performance. The scenes naturally accommodate the background of
 architectural designs. The carpet embellished with interlacing
 floral motifs, floors decorated with geometrical patterns, the
 lattice of windows, ornamentation of king's seat, richly designed
 costumes, decorum of the court persist common. The embellishment
 of the former two has attracted the most to the artists and seem
 an unavoidable parts of a indoor-theme.

The hunting-themes seem handy to the Mughal painters. Keen obser-
 vation of nature, vivid portrayal of the animal life, violent action
 reported in the human and animal figures, variety of postures,
 minute depiction of details and the natural surroundings characterise
 the hunting scenes. Mostly, the scenes are crammed of animals
 belonging to different species at one place in a Qamargaha - a⁵
 hunting circle. Animals frightened of the hunters are represented
 flying to save their lives. Among the animals the deer specially
 the black-buck has fascinated the painters most and it has been⁶
 sparingly depicted in the outdoor scene. The illustration represen-
 ting Akbar hunting wild-asses is differently treated. A few number

3. Akb; pl. 79(V.A.); Diwan; f. 247(Rampur); Tarikh. ff. 20a, 90a, 205b (Patna). Razm; pls. 12, 39 (Jaipore).

4. Akb; pls. 55, 56 (V.A.); Tarikh; f. 42b (Patna).

5. Akb; pls. 55, 56 (V.A.); Tarikh; f. 42b (Patna).

6. Tarikh; f. 331a (Patna).



PLATE xvii

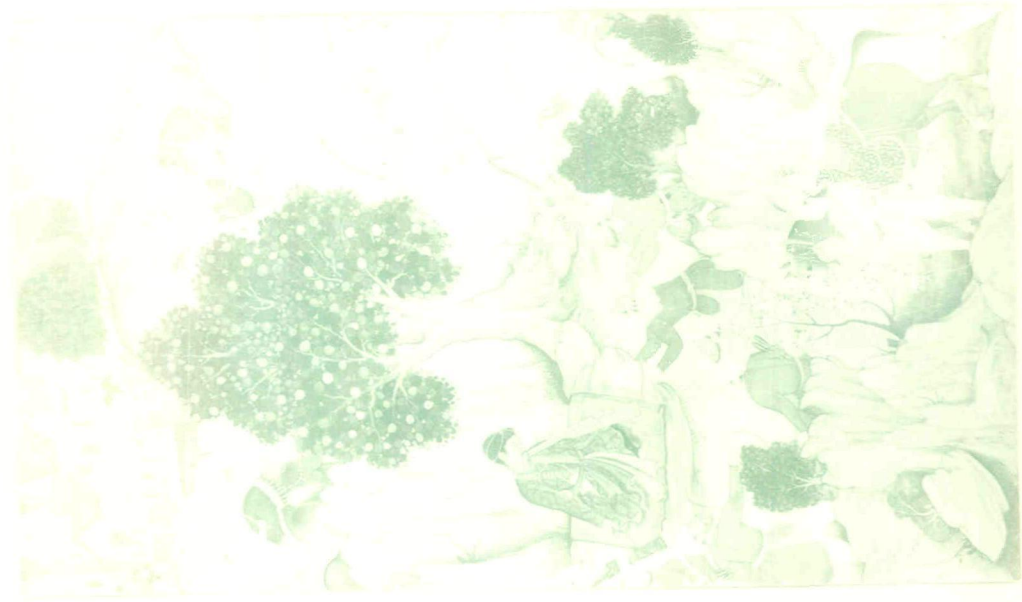


PLATE xviii

of the animals belonging to one group are composed leaving ample space for their escape and other objects to be drawn (plate xvii).

Similar theme with a slight variation represented on plate 84 (Akb; V.A.), displays Akbar sitting under a shady tree after being exhausted of hunting. The hunted animals are shown lying in the hunting ground at a distance and a few those escaped are flying for safety. The sitting posture of Akbar with an inclined head on the right shoulder, attendants and nobles taking care of him and lastly, the royal-attendant holding the horse waiting for his master assimilate the pensive effect of the theme (plate xvii).

In the hunting scenes an artist is assisted by the sparsely setting of hills, trees and springing plants, the uneven ground and casually a stream or a hill river. Hunting themes are the records of emperor's bravery who is always drawn in the centre mounting on a horse or rarely on foot; and casually on a side followed by nobles and attendants.

The hunting scenes also partake in the background or on margins in the expedition scenes. Only in one instance figure of a horse-rider chasing flying deers forms the background of an illustration. In other instances deers are shown chased by horse-riders etc; on the

7. Akb; pl. 105 (V.A.).

8. Tarikh; f. 46b (Patna).

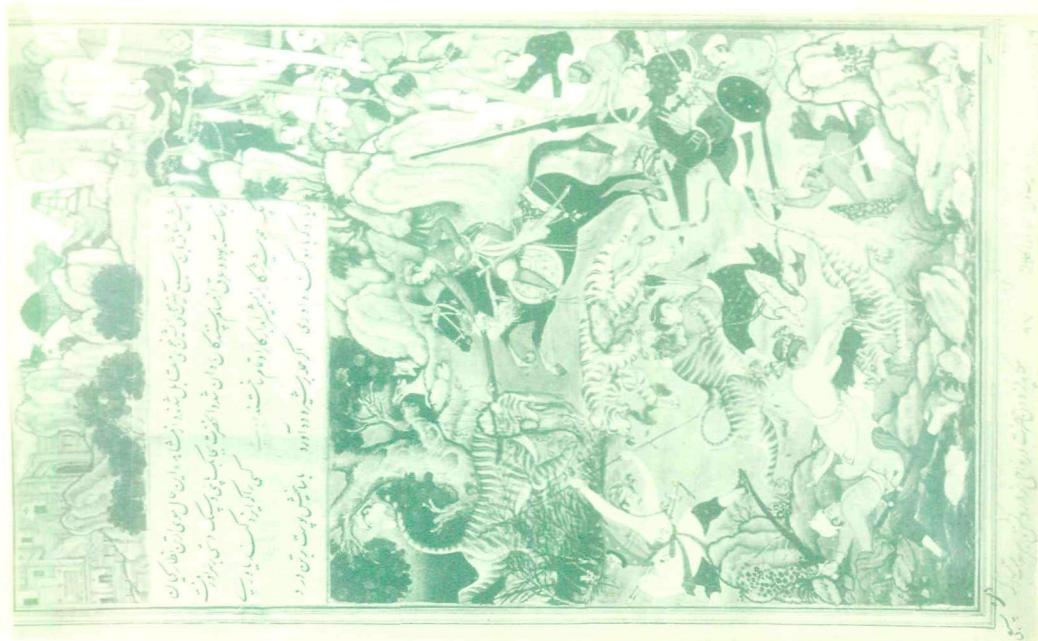


PLATE XIX (A)


(B)

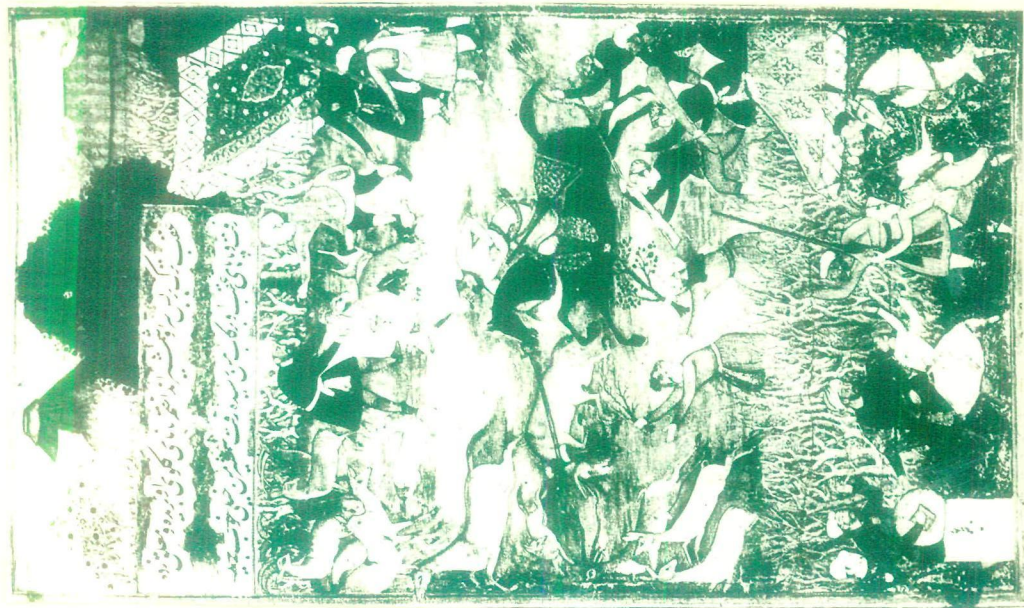


lower margin though rest of the scene remains unaffected of the event taking place.

The scenes represented on plate 17 (Akb; V.A.) and folio 283b (Tuzuk; B.M.) may be taken as the best example of depicting the hunting theme. The former, sketched by Basawan artist show the emperor making a sharp blow of sword on the neck of a tiger - drawn resisting the same in anger and revengeful, furious temperament. Others are engaged violently in killing the tigers by employing a spear; or an arrow; or a sword; or a jandhar. An attendant is also shown wielding a gun. The representation of the romance of hunting - in the central figure, fear of the wild life - in the figure shown escaping, in the lower margin and the struggle for life - in the figures shown in the closed grip of the beast, all evident the supremacy of the Mughal painters and their skill of capturing the temperaments and reporting the rhythm by employing a few lines (plate xix-A). The supplement of the same theme depicted on plate 18 of the same manuscript represent the continuity of the hunt. In its over-all effect remains the same (plate xix-B).

A double-page-illustration from the Tuzuk (B.M.) on folios 283b and 284a drawn by the artists - Manohar and Abdullah respectively;

-
7. Akb; pl. 105 (V.A.).
 8. Tarikh; f. 46b (Patna).
- 



(A)



(B)

PLATE xx

represents the Qamargaha made of tree-trunks and branches and guarded by the attendants and commoners etc. (plate xx - A and B). It has displayed the hunt of deers and nilagan etc; commoners engaged in driving the animals within the approach of the central - figure, the emperor making a blow on animal's neck, attendants managing the hunted animals, a few men witnessing the scene and over and above animal-figures drawn in confused state, escaping for safety - all combine the common contents of a hunting theme, illustrated on folio 283b (ibid). The central-figure is drawn so as to dominate the whole scene. The second part of the illustration on folio 284a (ibid) completes the hunting-circle crammed of wild life as is the characteristic of the Mughal miniatures. In an attempt to produce the maximum number of the animals artist composes them irrespective of their size. Qamargaha scenes are depicted so as to include as many animals of hunt as possible in one place.

An identical composition of a deer's hunt in a circle - Kamargaha, on folio 42b (Tarikh; Patna); an unsigned miniature has vividly described different weapons employed for hunt e.i. the sword, bow and arrow, spear, handgun, a thick stick mounted with iron-rings at the end- a type of an ordinary mace, long sticks provided with net-bags and the end to trap the animal's horns; and various works being performed by men including the central figure of an emperor making a sharp blow of the sword, nobles and others wielding their weapons and hunting the animals, attendants engaged in driving the animals to the hunting spot, a few managing the hunted animals and



PLATE XXI



PLATE XXII



(B)



(A)

PLATE xxiii

watching the scene. The vivid portrayal of action in the human and animal figures; animals escaping to save their lives in confused state; uneven, grassy ground with hillocks and the background comprising the stable servants giving fodder to the animals — ⁹ — all assist the painter in building — up a picture (plate xxi).

Deer's hunt by employing the tigers — tamed and trained for the purpose; is the subject of a few hunting scenes represented in the Akb. (V.A.) on plate 24 and 92-93. The tigers laden on bullock — cart or in a palki — supported on a beam and carried by two men; brought in the hunting-ground are left loose to chase the deers (plate xxii and xxiii). Hunting by tigers was a game to which the emperor enjoyed on the spot. Plates 24 and 92 (ibid) represent Akbar mounting on horse back watching the scene and instigating the tiger (pl. 24 ibid) to run-over the leaping deers. The deers and rams running vigorously, tigers shown taking a position for a chase or leap or killing the caught animal and the attendants rushing to the spot to manage the hunted animals — all make the representation living. The uneven ground, sparingly grown trees, plants, hills and casually a hill river (pl. 92 ibid) provide the natural surroundings to a hunting spot. Mostly, in the hunting scenes an effort is made to show the use of all the weapons, employed for the purpose. Vividity is introduced by showing all the actions in the scene, for instance king

9. Akb; f. 155b (C.B.); pls. 15, 24, 92 (V.A.).

10. Akb; pls. 17, 18, 24, 55, 56, 92, 93 (V.A.); Tarikh; f. 42b (Patna).



PLATE xxiv



PLATE xxv



PLATE XXVI

lending a blow, a couple of attendants slaughtering the hunted animal, some wielding the gun and yet some busy trappings other animals.

11
Trapping of the wild-elephants or tigers and deers is the other theme of a few illustrations depicting wild life (pls. 39 and 40 Akb; V.A.). Figure of the emperor appears on the margin on both the plates as matter of course. In the latter example, the composition is full of elephant figures and the centre is occupied by a tame elephant shown engaged in a combat with wild one (plate xxiv). The background is treated all alike the other hunting scenes and the method of encircling the central figure - a characteristic of the Akbari illustrations, has also survived. The same is true of the former example (plate xx). The miniatures representing the trapping of birds have been discussed at some length in this chapter.

12
The themes depicting the animal fights may be taken as a part of animal's representation and also a source of amusement. Generally, the elephants, deers specially the black-buck and rams are trained for combat. The rare representation of the first on plate 81 (Akb; V.A.) shows the combat on the outer skirt of the city. The central figures of elephants drawn in the lower part are again encircled by human figures keeping the emperor's position in the middle (plate xxvi).

11. Akb; pls. 34, 40 (V.A.).

12. Akb; pl. 81 (V.A.). Tuzuk; pl. 38 (Moscow).



PLATE XXVII



PLATE xxviii

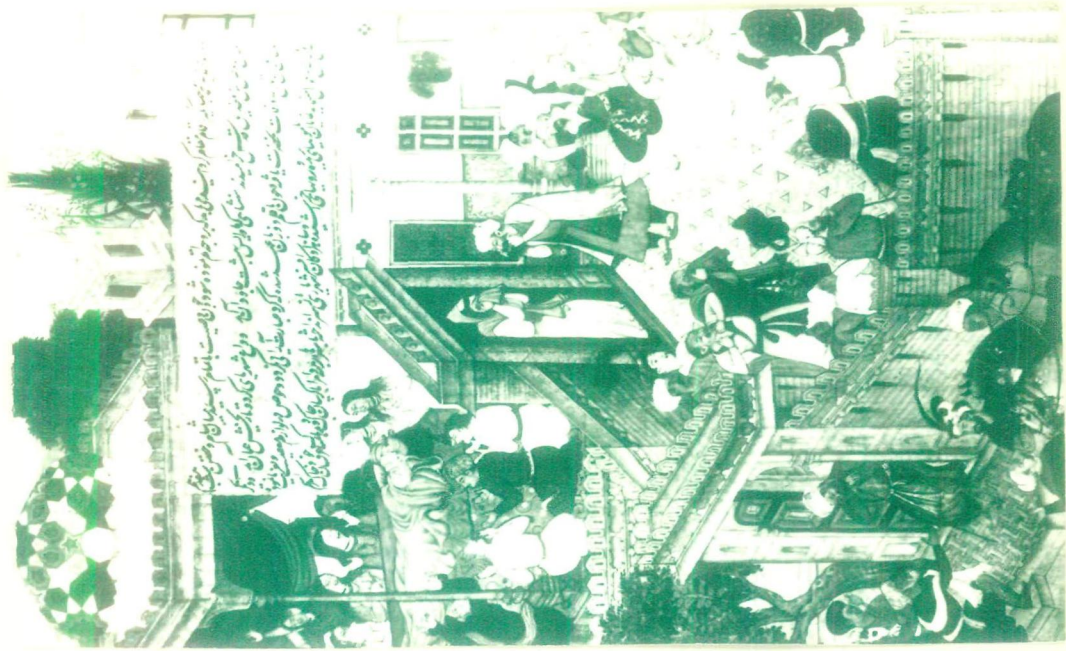


PLATE xxix

The flights of ram; deers are composed in a closed campus of a garden (f. 492a Tuzuk; B.M.). The flat deep green in the background has dominated the whole view and the group of four nobles shown in the distant corner remains isolated of the accident occurring in the centre. Only a few gestures of hands make the scene living (plate xxvii).

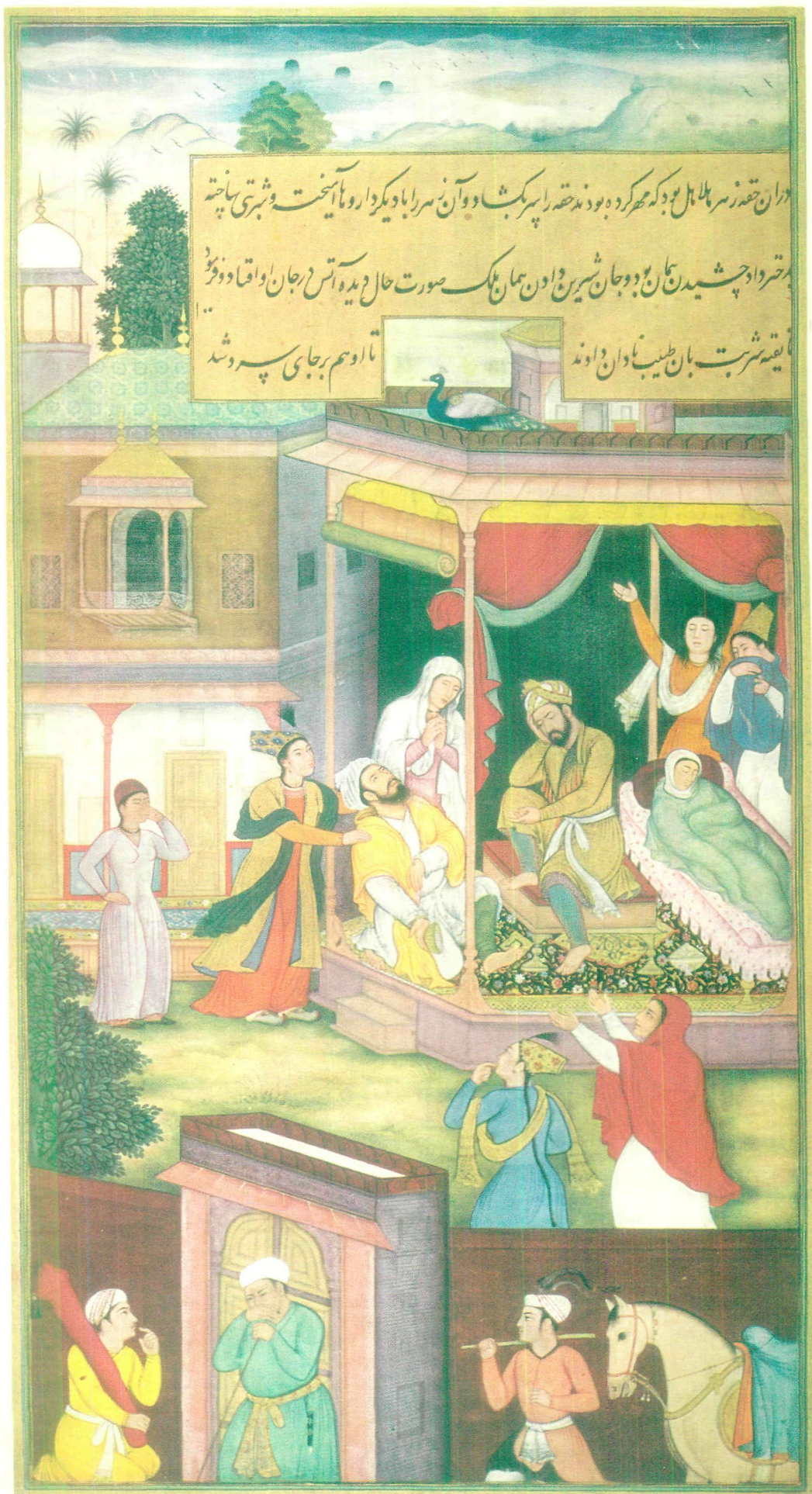
The art of portraying the flora and fauna display an admirable skill. There are 68 representations of animals and 51 those of trees contained¹³ in the various copies of the Tuzuk. Some of these are marvellous not only for life like representation but also for over all composition. The animals are generally shown in action. The Moscow manuscript is comparatively inferior so far as the depiction of this theme is concerned to the other two manuscripts viz. Delhi and B.M.; yet it¹⁴ has some remarkable animal paintings as the one shown the pheasant and the fight of black-bucks.

¹⁵
The pathetic and sorrowful themes depicting the illness or death of emperor are represented by employing the gestures of hands and faces, presence of a tabib, the sick emperor invariably attended by tabibs and attendants (plate xxiii), a few engaged in preparing the medicine etc; and lastly the nobles waiting outside to know of the welfare

13. Tuzuk; xxx pls. 88 - 113 (Delhi); pls. 57-86(B.M.); pls. 36-47 (Moscow). Appendix No. 7.

14. Tuzuk; pls. 38, 42, 43 (Moscow).

15. Tarikh; ff. 134a, 186a (Patna); Tuzuk; f. 70a (B.M.); pl. 20 (Delhi).



(f. 70a Tuzuk, B.M.). In a scene representing death of the emperor Timur on folio 134a (Tarikh; Patna), artist is assisted by the gestures of body. The innermost part of palace depicts near relatives including royal ladies around the dead-body and the next column accommodates friends and nobles etc. shown weeping bitterly, sitting with folded hands and bowed heads and some outburst of sorrow displayed tearing their cloths. The figures drawn consoling others and at the main entrance a figure represented ⁱⁿ pensive mood and the old man shocked of the news leave someone in the grip of sorrow (plate xxix). Similarly, on folio 186a (Ibid) the representation of the coffin of Mirza Shah Rukh, more or less is similar in gestures and postures. A scene representing the princess on death-bed, on folio 100; painted by the artist Manohar is also described by employing gestures of hands and faces as reported in former examples (plate xxx). The deceased surrounded by his near relations, the figure shown falling outburst of sorrow, ladies shown weeping, two men shown on the entrance exchanging the sorrowful news and the depiction of astonishment by keeping the fore-finger on the lower lip are the usual contents employed to expand a pathetic scene. the pigments invariably remain unaffected and these hardly play a role in the depiction of a particular theme. The objects display the colours and decoration etc. similar to other illustrations.

16

The themes representing execution of the rebellions could be shown

16. Akb; pls. 21, 34, 90 (V.A.); Tarikh; f. 70a (B.M.) pl. 20 (Delhi).



PLATE xxxii

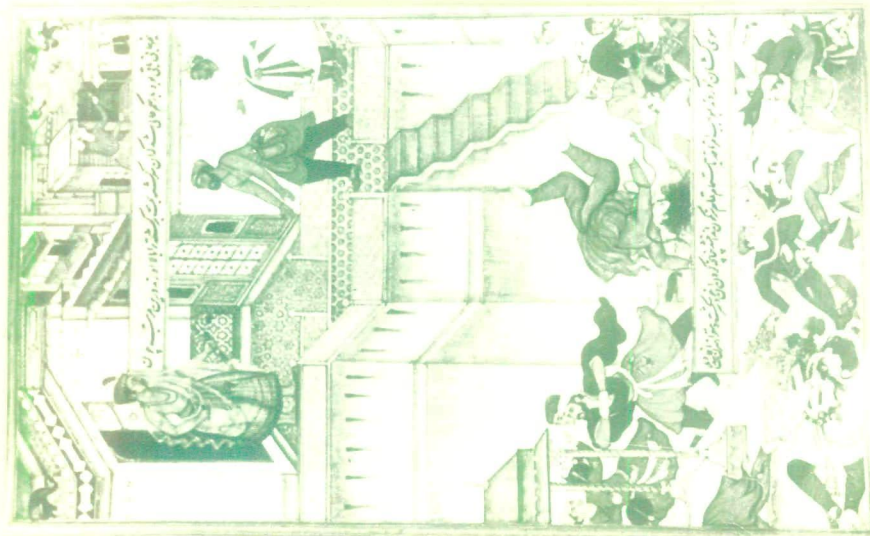


PLATE xxxi

by hanging them, or crushed under the feet of ragging elephants or thrown from the top of a palace. The plate 21 (Akb; V.A.), drawn by the artist Miskin displays Adham Khan being thrown from the palace walls on the order of Akbar. The frightened commoners and attendants etc. represented rushing away from the scene in a confused state make the view effective. The centre - figure shown in bending posture with stretched hands pointing downward links the whole picture (plate xxxi). The execution of Khan Zaman followers by employing the trained elephants, represented in the digonal composition sketched by the same artist on plate 90 (ibid) is a living scene displaying the ragging elephants outbrusted of furious anger (plate xxxii).

17

Feast and festivities include ceremonial scenes representing victory, birth of a prince and a feast. The depiction of last two themes also accommodate the musical performance by male and female dancers and musicians. Though there is no evidence of the miniatures illustrating entirely the musical-theme but the musical parties represented in the court scenes, in a few miniatures however, supplement the same.

18

The theme depicting celebration of a victory is represented with a great variety of standards: almas; flags and the musical instruments belonging to the naqqarkhana viz. naqqar^a, Qarna, Surna, Sanj, seeng

17. Akb; ff. 6b, 143b, (C.B.); pl. 8, 78, 80 (V.A.); Tarikh; ff. 4b, 40b, 136b, 254a, 284a (Patna); Razm; pls. 37, 84, 119 (Jaipore).

18. Akb; pl. 79 (V.A.); Diwan; f. 30 (Rampur), Razm; pls. 12, 39 (Jaipore).



T 1301

19

etc. etc. A scene from the Tuzuk (B.M.), represents Babur followed by his army men, royal attendants and nagarkhana etc. sprinkling holy water on the alams fixed on ground in a line. Similar depiction²⁰ may also be seen in the other copies of the Tuzuk.

21

Birthday ceremonies have been drawn according a set composition which mostly admit the princess with her new born baby in the inner part of the palace - generally shown in the high margin, the astrologers preparing the birth chart; musicians and dancers mainly female artist giving their performances; nobles etc. attending to the emperor to wish on the occasion, and lastly, in the lower margin distribution of gold or silver coins among the poor²¹s or casually the nagarkhana playing on the damama, nagars, surna, sanj, Qarna etc. A painter composes these contents so as to partake in the whole picture. An illustration representing the birth of a prince on plate 78 (Akb; V.A.) is composed in the ascending order. The lowest group belongs to the commoners, saints, beggars etc. waiting for coins distributed among them, musicians and attendants in the middle part of the former giving their performances, and lastly, the attending maids taking care of the child and the princess lying in her bed in a room attended by other

19. Tuzuk; f. 128b (B.M.).

20. Tuzuk; f. 30 (Delhi); one plate from B.M. published in Laroussed Encyclopedia by Happer & Row; plate 112.

21. Akb; f. 143b (C.B.); pls. 8, 78, 80 (V.A.); Tarikh; ff. 40b, 254a, 284a (Patna); Razm; pl. 125 (Jaipore).

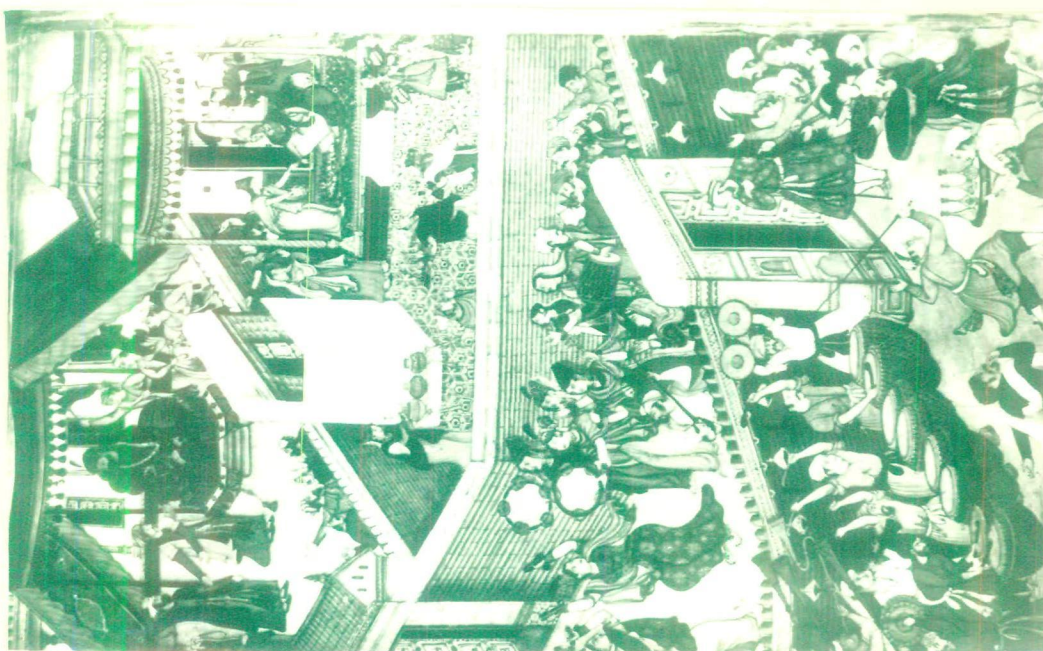


PLATE xxxiv



PLATE xxxiii

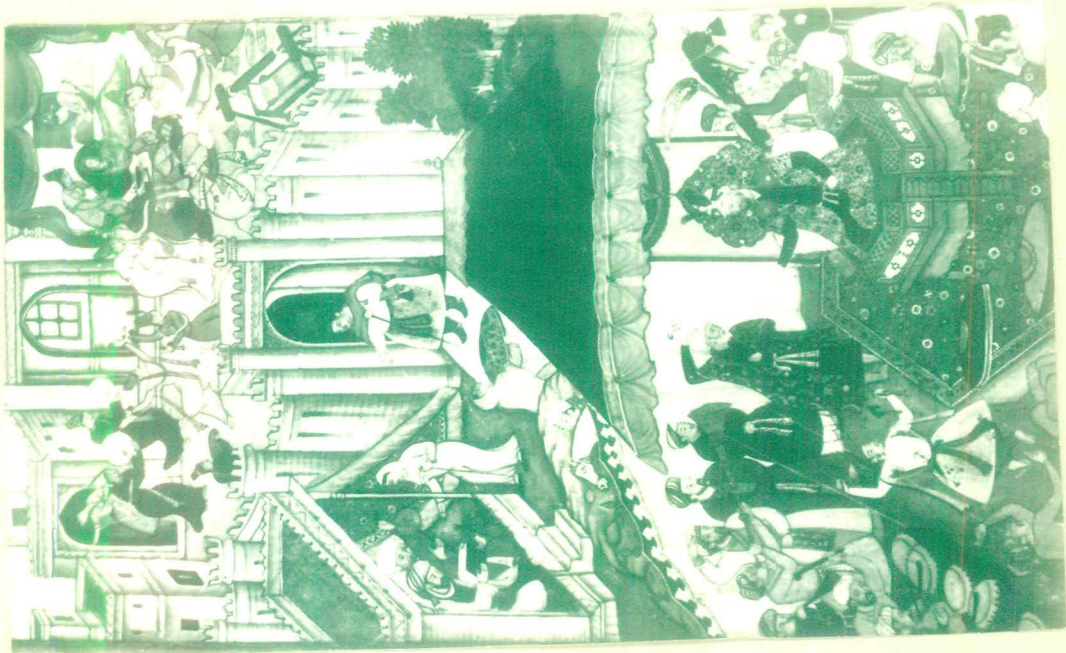


PLATE XXXV

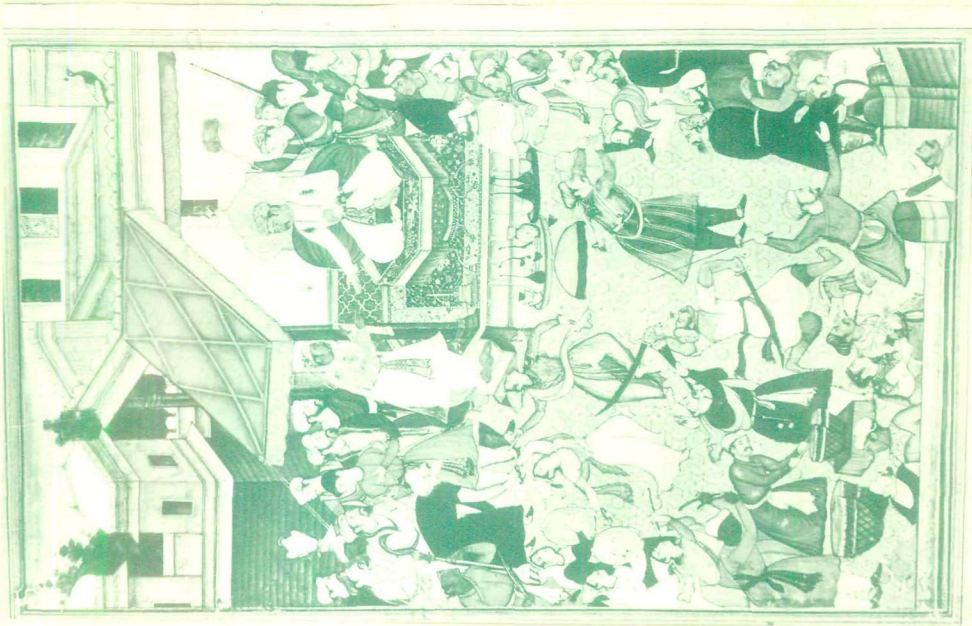


PLATE XXXVI

maids (plate xxxiii). Another instance of the similar theme, identical in composition with a slight change in the upper margin, has survived on folio 143b (Akb; C.B.). The latter represents astrologers preparing the horoscope, in the upper part of the illustration.

Best depiction of such themes has belonged to the Tarikh (Patna) on folio 40b, an unsigned miniature. The whole composition is divided into four parts. The upper half divided diagonally represents the emperor and nobles, the latter to wish on the occasion, and the princess attended by maids etc. The lower half accommodates the musical parties. Firstly comes the group of female musicians and dancers and afterwards outside the palace the Naggarkhana accomplished with most of its musical instruments. The illustration is distinguished for the variety of the musical instruments represented and the performance of the naggarkhana. The rhythmic action reported in the dancing figures, stretched hands of drum-beaters and sanj players etc. produce a dramatic effect in the picture (plate xxxiv). The birth of Akbar represented on folio 284 (Ibid) by the artist Kham, is depicted by employing similar contents, though their placement has changed. The introduction of the astrologers preparing horoscope is an extra thought employed to illustrate the theme. The princess attended by maids, a few females taking care of child, musical performance by lady dancers and musicians, emperor receiving the happy news and lastly, performance of the naggarkhana are the common contents composed in a different situation (plate xxxv).

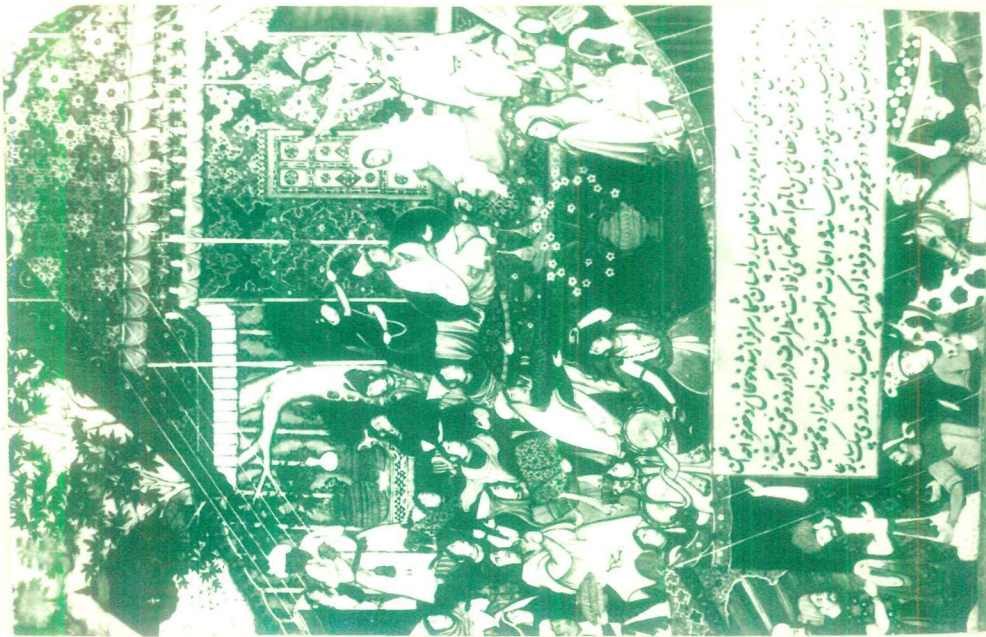


PLATE xxxvii



PLATE xxxviii

Human figures drawn in different poses and gestures of faces depicting varying moods of surprise or appreciation etc. make the picture rhythmic. Dancing figures are distinguished by the action and rhythm described in them. The marked tendency of displaying the maximum number of the musicians dominates the composition. An artist does not fail to make the fullest use of the ground while composing two musicians holding dundubhi and manjeera - shown isolated from the central scene. The figure of an emperor represented busy in state affairs takes away the eye from the action taking place in the centre and break the picture in two different units (plate xxxvi). Similarly, on folios 6b and 9a (Tarikh; Patna), Veena player and musicians playing on rubab, chang and flutes represented on the extreme right margin hardly co-relate the central scene. Lastly, on the folio 72a of the same manuscript, performance of the dancer and the chang holder shown on the extremity of the camp's campus remain unidentified (plate xxxvii).

In other instances composition in ascending order is preferred. The Tuzuk represents musical performance at Kabul on the occasion of Humayun's birth (f. 295a B.M.). The picture is composed of a feast accompanied by musicians and dancers in the open-air. The musical performance^{has} included male and female dancers, the former wielding the sword and musicians playing on the rubab, sura, nagqara, chang and flute. Male and females depicted separately in groups are drawn on the either sides of a fountain. The plants blooming with blue, white, red and pink-coloured flowers, the fountain, and the garden - all accomplish the theme reported in the centre of the miniature.

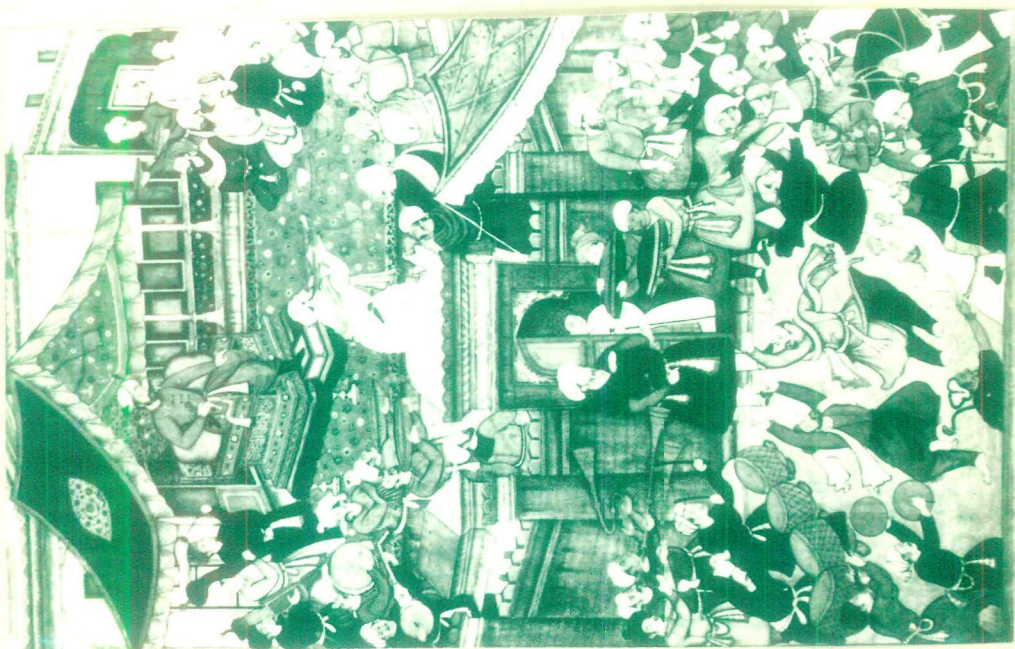


PLATE XL



PLATE XXXIX

The bright colours of costumes i.e. Vermilion red, yellow, blue; shamiyana in crimson red produce contrast with the greenery of garden and grey-greenish ground, which has neutralised the warm - effect of the bright pigments. Lastly, in the lower group, all alike the other compositions attendants etc. are shown doing their works. Interestingly, two musicians: rubab and duf - players are represented waiting outside for an opportunity of the performance of their skill (plate xxxviii).

Similar objects make a picture of a feast scene on folio 4b (Tarikh; Patna), painted by Basawan. Though the situation of the tank, number of the musicians and instruments has varied but the central position of the dancers and the place of main dastarkhan remain identical. The background of cypress trees embraced by the trees of five-petaled flowers and trees with dense foliage has striking resemblance with the former. The gaiety expression described in the figures of onlookers and the variety of postures in the dancing figures make the picture rhythmic (plate xxxix).

The performance of naggarkhana is shown limited to the themes of ²⁴ greater importance viz. celebration of prince's birth. As a matter of course it is invariably represented outside at the main entrance, casually accompanied by one or two male dancers (plate XL). The naggara of varying sizes, surna, qarna - straight or formed like an

24. Akb; f. 143b (C.B.); pls. 8, 78, 80 (V.A.); Tarikh; ff. 40b, 136b, 254a (Patna).



PLATE xli

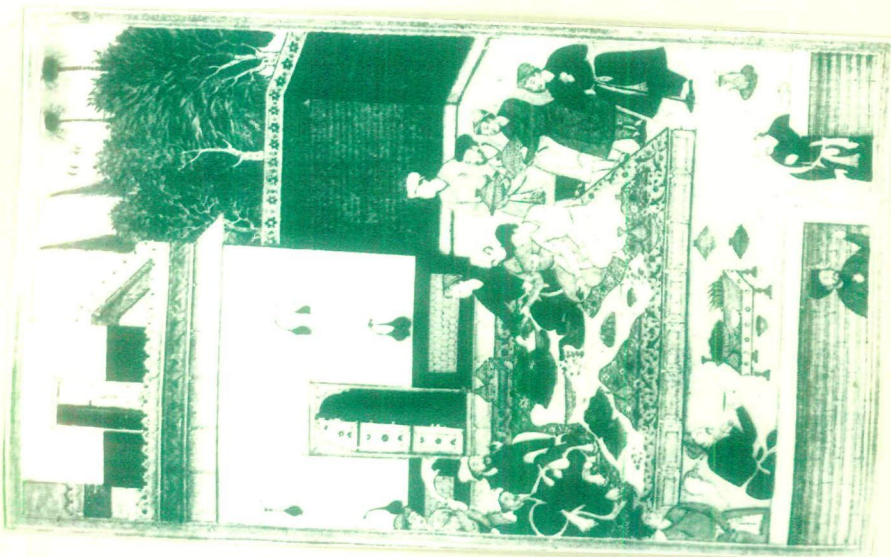


PLATE xlii

S with elongated arms, sanj etc. are the instruments depicted
25
repeatedly.

26
In the Razmnama miniatures musical performance is a part of the havan
or ashvamegha yagya - a religious rite, and feast etc. In the first
two the performance is displayed in open place. It may be a riverside
or so. Mirdanga is the main drum. The representation of musical
performance in the accompaniment of the procession of ashvamegha
yagya, is the typically Indian tradition (pl.89 Razm; Jaipore). The
composition of dancers and musicians in a court scene on plate 12
(Ibid) is identical to plate 79 (Akb; V.A.). Interestingly, the
27
elephant trained to weave musical-pattern is shown in the accompaniment
of the nagqarkhana. The representation of ladies with Veena and the
rubab following the princess whose lover is depicted sleeping under
28
the shady groves of trees; is an Indian mode of expressing a theme.
The plants and dense foliage and straight tree trunks add pleasing
effect to the surrounding. The picture describing lovers in a garden,
is rare in the Akbari-illustrations (plate XL1).

29 30
The scenes depicting exclusively the feast or preparation of a feast
accommodate cooks, attendants serving the meals and the dastarkhan

25. Ibid; plate XL.

26. Razm; pls. 89, 121 (Jaipore).

27. Ibid; pl. 72.

28. Ibid; pl. 118.

29. Tuzuk; f. 269 (B.M.).

30. Akb; f. 6b (C.R.); Diwan; f. 116 (Rampur); Tarikh; f. 118a
(Patna).

in the centre on a raised platform embellished with a carpet. The folio 252b (Tuzuk; B.M.) describes the preparation of a feast. Cooks are represented busy in dishing out the meals from degchis and the attendants holding the qabs and large platters etc. The illustration depicting Babur attended by Muzaffar Mirza on folio 217a (Ibid) is a composite picture which includes both kitchen and the dastarkhan. The picture is drawn in an ascending order. The lower group belongs to the cooks, and attendants shown at their works, and the centre is composed of the Qabs, payalas, bowls containing food articles and the serving attendants etc. The upper part is the dastarkhan.

The illustration on plate 28 (Akb, V.A.) is more or less composed on the similar lines. The utensils employed in the scene, arrangement of Qabs, representation of cooks and attendants, the figure of an attendant drawn in bending posture displayed keeping the Qab on a carpet, and others holding large platters waiting for an order are the common contents. The utensils depicted in the feast scenes are generally identical. Emphasis is laid on the objects specifically connected with the idea and these are shown significantly and prominently. However the Kitchen scenes represent more figure of men than those of utensils; and yet in a few instances it is the latter that strike the eye while the humans remain comparatively insignificant.

The miniature illustrating exclusively a feast is rare in the Akbari

31. Tuzuk; f. 253a (B.M.).

illustrations. The only instance we come across is represented by the artist Tiryā (f. 269 Tuzuk, B.M.). Similar to the former example, nobles are shown sitting on either sides of the dastarkhan invariably attended by attendants. The gestures of faces and hand-poses make the picture rhythmic (plate XLii). The Qabs and large platters are always shown full of food-articles etc. as a matter of course, in the themes depicting feasts.

One theme has been repeatedly drawn by different artists, in the various manuscripts. A manuscript of importance was illustrated again and again whenever it was so needed. Several copies of different manuscripts have survived to this day. For instance the copies of³² the Akbarnama, Anwar-i-suhaili, Razmnama, Diwan-i-Hafiz, Ramayana and Baburnama etc. are known to exist in the several collection of the world. These contain many miniatures representing common themes, though they invariably differ in their art of representation. The individuality and skill of each artist does not fail to express itself in the treatment. This is more clearly observed through comparison of duplicate reproductions of the same theme. Thirty six of such³³ miniatures are known to us in the three copies of the Tuzuk. One³⁴ theme which is common to all is that of the bird trappers at work.

32. Appendices No. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7.

33. Appendix No. 8.

34. Tuzuk; f. 45 (Delhi) f. 190 (B.M.); pl. 22 (Moscow); bird-trappers shown at work (Fog Art Museum); published in the book 'Art of Mughal India ; pl.



PLATE xLIII



PLATE XLIV

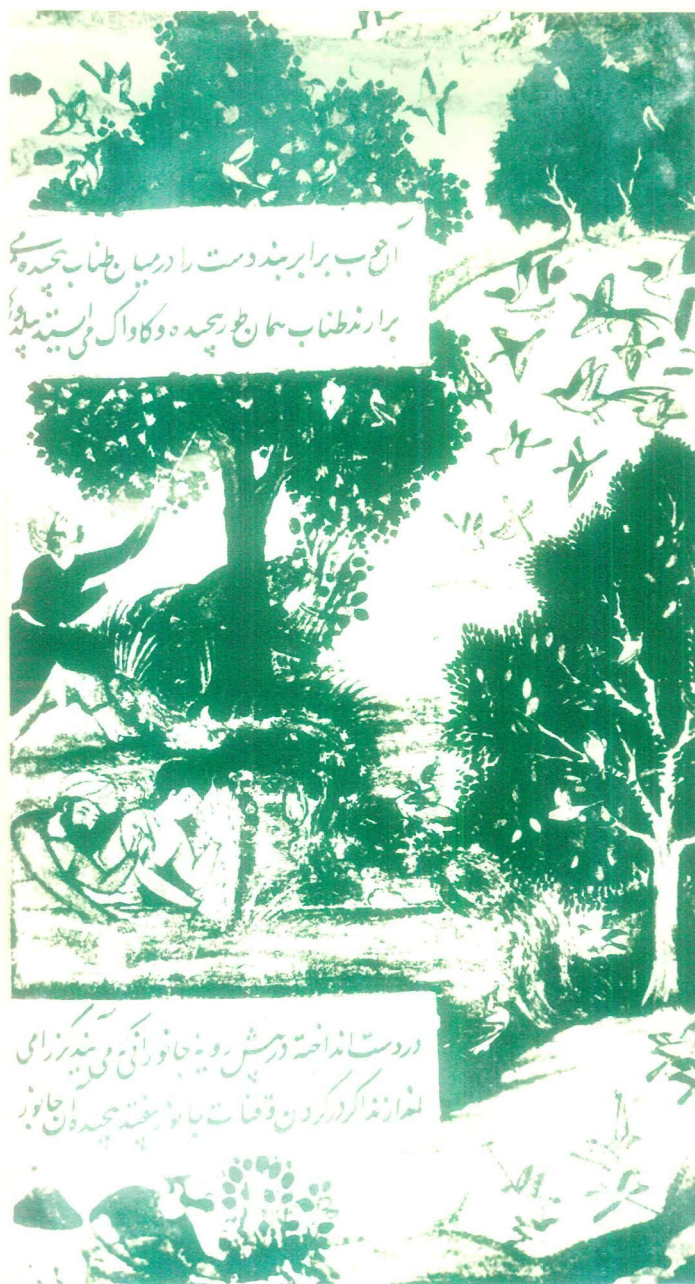


PLATE XLV

35

The Fog Art Museum has also one painting of the same subject. These all are differently composed as such the artist has conceived of the layout in his own way. In the Moscow painting the foreground is entirely covered by a net with birds trapped in its holes. The four trappers engaged in the work are shown in an expectant mood on the left margin. The rest of the space is filled with rocks and sparsely situated trees. It is an intelligent composition in so far as the main object required to be shown dominates the whole scene while the complementaries are kept in the background (plate XLiii). A similar composition is found in the Delhi manuscript bearing the name of artist Payag. From the point of view of execution the latter is however very clearly superior. The painter of British Museum miniature is Shyam. Here the composition is far more imaginative but includes too many complementary objects. A massive castle in the farthest corner balanced by a crooked elevation of a cliff and a black cluster of clouds overhanging the top margin; huge, dense trees overgrowing the varying levels of mounds, a stream in the foreground with ducks swimming and garus cranes composedly watching; shrubs stretching along the bank, a company of no less than ten humans waiting at the trap and yet a pair of fox perched fearlessly on the rocks at the bottom - all are crammed up in the picture. Yet a good portion in the middle is left for the action. A cluster of birds is shown descending on the net or already trapped on the right side. The trappers are also on the left. The artist has tried to be

as vivid as possible and has taken care to show all the implements used in bird-catching. These include a thatch screen, a glued stick, a falcon and there are cages and baskets for keeping the trapped birds (plate XLiv). The layout of the illustration contained in the Fog Art Museum is still different. Here a man is shown actually using the glue-stick while the landscape is well balanced by a distant plan and thick trees, dividing it into three parts. All this apart, in accuracy of line drawing, creating of the atmosphere, depiction of details, colouring and specially in depicting the various postures of the birds the British Museum painting excels all others. The human figures here are certainly more varied and characteristic. As compared to this the other paintings seem not only too simple but also a bit clumsy. The birds are shown mostly in the profile. The treatment of trees is fine in all of them and yet a wide conceptual difference sets them apart from each other.

Despite the general affinity characterising the settings and the atmosphere of similar themes the resourcefulness of the artist makes itself felt in the manner of their treatment. The landscape go on varying endlessly, the figures are positioned in newer and newer combinations and so do the buildings; the trunk of trees, foliage and the rest. Mughal painters were versatile in representing different themes. The depiction of Hindu themes describing the celebration of a havan or ashvamezha yagya; Hindu god and goddesses;

36. Razm; pls. 5, 14, 26, 51, 62, 74, 81, 89, 114, 121, 139, 141, 143, 145 (Jaipore).

idea of the hell; demon's figures; angels in the service of Indra etc. etc.; with equal skill evident the broad imagination of the painters working at Akbar's court.

Legendary-themes have left a greater scope for artist's imagination and creative impulse. In the treatment of such themes he is assisted by nature in filling up the blank spaces. The objects directly relevant to the story are given the first place and the nature comprising of sky, hills, river, trees, plants and mounds of earth etc. are taken as subsidiary objects. In a few illustrations the landscape have become prominent and the main figures are left in the background. To make the distant view more living, commoners are represented casually.

The poetic-themes describing different poetries composed by Hafiz of Shiraj; represented in the illustrations of Diwan-i-Hafiz are expanded as those of the Anwar-i-suhaili (Varanasi) - the legendary themes. In these illustrations mostly commoners, animals and casually the nobles or emperor are depicted. Events generally relate the life of common-men and provide an ample ground to an artist, to make a good use of his observation of commoner's life. The manuscript Anwar³⁷ (Varanasi) has represented a cultivator, a wood-cutter, a washerman and his wife, a scribe and his helper etc. which are rarely found in other manuscripts.

37. Anwar; ff. 61, 113, 160, 218, 242 Varansi.